retire Government debts only if you raise resources. These resources are required to meet current consumption. Money is fungible, whether you use borrowed resources to retire old debts or pay for current consumption. Unless you can get rid of the revenue deficit and show a revenue surplus, the question of retiring Government debts does not arise.

Violation of Customs Rules

*125. SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of persons arrested for violation of customs rules in the country during the last three years; and

(b) the amount of drugs, gold, silver, cash and foreign articles seized from them custom zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). During the last three years i.e. between 1993-94 and 1995-96, 3702 persons were arrested by the officers of the Customs & Central Excise for violation of Customs laws.

Information regarding seizure of drugs, gold, silver, currency and other articles is not compiled zone-wise. However, approximate quantities of drugs, gold & silver and value of currency and other foreign articles, seized from such arrested persons during the same period of three years, are given below :-

Qnty. of Drugs (in Kg.)	Qnty. of Gold (in Kg.)	Qnty. of Silver (Indian & Foreign) (in Kg.)	Value of Currency	Value of other foreign articles (Rs. in lacs)
30751.54 +5298 Ltrs. of Acetic Anhydride	2289.44	12731.354	55,09.462	181.27.71

[Translation]

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister the total amount of seizures made by the Customs officials from these persons who have violated custom laws. I would also like to know the quantity of goods lying with Customs Department and on which Custom Duty was to be collected and the Government has not been able to take a decision in this regard so far.

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I am sorry, I may not have quite understood what he is saying. He wanted to know the number of persons arrested, the amount of drugs, gold, silver, cash seized from Customs zonewise. I have given that in the answer. For the last three years I have given the quantity of gold seized, quantity of silver seized, value of currency seized and value of articles seized. What more does he want?

[Translation]

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the details of arrests have been given. I would like to know the actual position of the cases disposed of. How many cases have been finalised and how many cases are still pending with the court.

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, 3702 persons have been arrested during the last three years. I do not have the information about the cases pending. I will furnish this information later. The total is 3702. I will break it up and furnish it to you.

[Translation]

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : In reply to my question, the hon'ble Minister has said that he will send the details but I would like to know the details of the number of cases of arrest during the last three years, the number of cases pending with court, the number of cases in which challans are to be presented and the F.I.R.s lodged with the Police alongwith the cases still pending with the police. These details should be made available because it is not clear from the information given by the hon'ble Minister as to what number of cases are pending at various stages. The information about the number of cases in which political persons were arrested should also be given.

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I have some information. I do not have information about the cases pending in courts and the year of pendency. Whatever information I have now, I will give it to you and I will furnish the remaining later. In 1995-96, 1051 persons were arrested, 259 persons were prosecuted, 153 were convicted, 313 orders under COFFEPOSA were issued and 290 were detained under COFFEPOSA. In 1994-95, 1095 persons were arrested, 760 were prosecuted, 334 were convicted, 398 orders under COFFEPOSA were issued and 385 were detained. In 1993-94, going back to three years, 1214 persons were arrested, 363 were convicted, 519 orders were issued under COFFEPOSA and 383 were detained. The information about year-wise pendency of court cases, I will give him later.

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN : I would like to know whether the Government is considering a proposal to

increase the incentives to the Customs officials for their meritorious work.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, today there are significant incentives. Monetary rewards admissible to officers and informers are upto 20 per cent of the value of the goods seized or the duty evaded detected. 20 per cent is a substantial incentive. We also give away Presidential awards to officers of Customs and Central Excise. There is another scheme of giving appreciation certificates for meritorious work. If the hon. Member has any suggestion about any other incentive, I am ready to look into it.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, other hon. Members wanted to know how many have been arrested so far. But my question is how many VIPs and VVIPs have not been arrested.

Next, I would like to know about the role of Customs and Excise officials. How many of them have been prosecuted and how much of tax has been collected from those prosecuted? I have discovered to my utter surprise that when the bank officials were involved, the Income Tax Department officers do not go to their houses, do not search and do not collect revenue. One arm does not know what the other arm is doing. How many Customs officials have been prosecuted or penalised and how much income tax has been collected from them? That is my question.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I would require a separate notice on the departmental action against the officers because this question does not relate to action against officers.

[Translation]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : This issue relates to seizure of those drugs which have been imported without paying the import duty. But on the other hand, there are some cases also where imports have not been made and only bogus documents have been prepared.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, foreign exchange is remitted through Reserve Bank of India after preparing bogus documents. It is not a trivial issue but it is a scam involving Rs. 700 crore. The hon'ble Finance Minister has also accepted in his reply the figure of Rs. 542 crore involved in this scam. But as per my knowledge the amount involved increased to Rs. 700 crore later on. I have written four times to know about those who are involved in this scam but he is not ready to disclose the names of the persons found guilty. Even he is not ready to tell about the action taken against those who are involved in it. I would like to know as to why he does not want to disclose their names? Why he is not taking this House into confidence? This is a scam involving Rs. 700 crore. A huge amount of money has gone to the foreign countries. These people have looted this money. This House has a right to know as to how and where this money has gone and who are involved in this scam?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have written to the hon'ble Minister three times in this regard but have not received any reply till date. I had also made a request for half-an-hour discussion on it but it was also turned down. Therefore, I request you to do justice with me and instrut the hon'ble Minister to apprise the House of it. It is an issue involving Rs. 700 crore. Who are involved in this scam? I would like to know the names of those bank officers and V.I.Ps who are involved in this scam and the Government is protecting them?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think that it arises out of this question. This question relates to violation of customs rules and you are talking about banks.

[Translation]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this matter relates to FERA, custom and import of goods. This matter comes under this question. Therefore, my question is relevant.

MR. SPEAKER : No, in my opinion, this matter does not come under this question. However, if the Minister wants to give reply, he can do so.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this issue pertain to a scam inviting Rs. 700 crore which is the biggest scam of this country.

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, if the hon. Member is talking about any specific case, then he must give me information about that case and I will furnish the reply.

MR. SPEAKER : He says that he has written three letters to you.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : He will try to find out those letters.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : If he lets me know which case he has in mind, I will certainly reply. He writes me dozens of letters. If he tells me which case he is referring to now, I will reply to that.

On FERA seizures of foreign currency and Indian currency, in 1994 1995 and 1996, we had 1540, 1175 and 803 searches respectively so far. Indian currency seized has been Rs. 974 lakh, Rs. 1021 lakh and Rs. 802 lakh respectively and foreign currency seized, which, converted to rupees comes to Rs. 814 lakh, Rs. 541 lakh and Rs. 301 lakh respectively. The number of persons arrested is 365, 228 and 172 respectively. If the hon. Member has any particular case in mind and if he puts a question, I will certainly give a reply.